

Creating aspirations and enabling achievement

13th March 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

Given the daily changes to the advice given to schools and the country by the Government, I am writing to give you an update on our response to the Coronavirus outbreak.

As of today, the DfE have decided **not** to close all schools in the country. However, we do recognise that as staff are required to self-isolate, there may come a time when we do not have enough staff to safely supervise and teach pupils and students in school. A decision to close a school in these circumstances will be taken locally on an individual school basis. If that did happen, we would inform you, as in any other school closure, such as due to snow or a building concern.

We will continue to follow the DfE guidance sent to us daily concerning the virus. The key message that we are getting is about the importance of personal hygiene through thorough handwashing and I think that we all know about taking over 20 seconds every time we wash our hands and to wash them every time we enter and leave a building.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public#history>

If you feel that your child meets the criteria for self-isolation i.e. persistent cough and/or a high temperature, they **must not** come into school and parents/carers should follow the advice from Public Health England.

“What does self-isolation mean?”

Self-isolation means cutting yourself off from the rest of the world. You need to stay at home, not go to work, school or other public places, and avoid public transport or taxis, says Public Health England. "Common-sense" steps include staying in a well-ventilated room with a window that can be opened and keeping away from other people in your home.

It's OK to have friends, family or delivery drivers drop off supplies to get you through. But you shouldn't have any visitors.”

“What if someone self-isolating shares a home?”

If you are self-isolating and share a kitchen, try to avoid using it when other people are there and take your meals back to your room to eat. Clean all the surfaces at home with household cleaning products daily.

Although you might not be able to entirely separate yourself from family members or flatmates, the advice is to limit contact as much as possible.

If possible stay at least 2m (6ft) from other people you live with and sleep alone. Keep away from vulnerable people.



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People living with someone in isolation should wash their hands often, using soap and water for at least 20 seconds - especially after coming into contact with them. You shouldn't share towels, toiletries or other household items with someone in isolation and they should have a separate bathroom. If that is not possible, the isolated person should use the bathroom last, cleaning it thoroughly afterwards if they are able. Any rubbish that the isolated person has been in contact with should be double-bagged and kept. If the person tests positive, you will be told what to do with their waste."

The Government advice on self-isolation applies to children as well as adults, and parents/carers need to be responsible and think about others when deciding whether to send their children into school or not. If pupils and students are legitimately absent due to self-isolation, then this **will not** lead to any formal action in relation to school attendance.

All three schools have made the decision to postpone all trips and staff training due to take place until after Easter.

If Sir Harry Smith Community College needs to shut due to a lack of staff, then any practical exams such as Drama will still go ahead, with the key staff supervising as originally planned. If this scenario does happen, more detailed instructions for students will be forthcoming.

When we get nearer to the Year 6 SATs and main GCSE and A-Level season, we will send you more information as to what the situation will be for them. If we are forced to close by the Government, we will expect advice from them and all the exam boards as to what happens next for these students.

I recognise that this is not an easy situation for anyone. We will just have to work together by following all the advice given to us by the DfE and Public Health England. We will endeavour to keep you informed if there are any changes to the situation and I would like to ask for your support and co-operation during this period of extreme challenge for all of us.

Yours sincerely,



Jonathan Digby
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